

Creative Growth Art Center was the first program of its kind in the country for people with disabilities. It provided national leadership in innovative programming in the fields of art and disabilities. Open to any adult who is physical, mentally or emotionally disabled and interested in art, it is internationally renowned for the quality of the art work by its studio artists, and is a model for many other programs throughout the country. The mission of the organization is to provide an environment where the visual arts can flourish, where people with disabilities have opportunities for creative expression and can achieve at the highest level. The organization also serves as an advocate for the arts and artists with disabilities.

Initiated with a National Endowment for the Arts grant, more than 4,000 people a year visit the art gallery, the first gallery in the country dedicated to the art produced by people with disabilities. The organization has been a trendsetter, featuring exhibitions which paired the work of well-known Bay Area artists beside that of severely disabled artists. Create Growth presented the first exhibition in the United States of Russian Outsider artists from the Humanitarian Center Museum in Moscow. In 1994, in conjunction with the Oakland Museum, it held the first Outsider Art symposium on the West Coast. The Center's enriched environment, as well as the creative process itself, provides beneficial results to program participants. Many studio artists have developed into award-winning artists whose works are exhibited and sought after by collectors the world over. Dwight Mackintosh, Gerone Spurill, William Scott, to name a few, are classic examples of Outsider artists who crossed over from the alternative gallery scene into mainstream art. A younger group of studio artists is carving out its own success with Camille Holvoet, featured in *Truth from Darkness*, a traveling exhibition of the work of people with mental illness. Creative Growth artists Juan Aguilera and Carmen Quinones were paired with Mexican artist Maria Luisa de Mateo in *Arte Sin Fronteras*, to demonstrate the artists' unique cultural influences. Studio artists just completed a 109 square foot tile wall mural at the Palo Alto city entrance. Adding Light is a limited edition print portfolio by able and disabled artists, a project cosponsored by the California arts Council. In San Francisco, the Grill of the Tenderloin, of the California Culinary Academy, is decorated with imaginative art by artists from Creative Growth Art Center.

Among its artists whose works have been immortalized in books are Dwight Machintosh and Judith Scott. Scott, who is deaf and has Downs Syndrome, has been in the studio for 11 years and creates wrapped sculptures of yarn and fabric, using armatures of discarded materials.

I build on the words of my predecessor, Congressman Ron Dellums, "... that creativity is a human quality that not only transcends boundaries presented by mental and physical disabilities but national boundaries as well." Creative Growth Art Center provides the opportunity for us to understand that people with disabilities enrich and revitalize the community's cultural life.

MAKE THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS PER- MANENT

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that is vital to the interests of minority veterans in our nation. Current law mandates the termination of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV) as of December 31, 1999. My bill would simply repeal the provision of law that discontinues this important committee's mandate so that its critical work on behalf of minority veterans can continue into the next century. Saving the Advisory Committee will require no additional taxpayer funding.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans operates in conjunction with the VA Center for Minority Veterans. This committee consists of members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and includes minority veterans, representatives of minority veterans and individuals who are recognized authorities in fields pertinent to the needs of minority veterans. The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans helps the VA Center for Minority Veterans primarily by advising the Secretary on the adoption and implementation of policies and programs affecting minority veterans, and by making recommendations to the VA for the establishment or improvement of programs in the Department for which minority veterans are eligible.

The unique concerns of minority veterans will become increasingly important for our nation during the next decade. The majority of African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American and Native American veterans served in the armed forces during Vietnam and post-Vietnam eras. The percentage of U.S. veterans who are minorities is expected to continue to increase as we enter the 21st century.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans has helped to ensure that our veterans programs address the unique concerns of these men and women. Outreach to diverse veterans communities, from Native American reservations to inner-city neighborhoods, has helped inform thousands of minority veterans about opportunities for assistance at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I believe that these tasks are essential to the success of the VA in serving all veterans in our nation.

Nevertheless, many specific issues of concern to minority veterans need to be addressed further. Minority veterans confront the debilitating effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse in greater numbers. Minority veterans suffer from a higher incidence of homelessness. Access to health care for Native Americans is a common problem. In addition, access to adequate job training is a difficulty for many minority veterans, a high percentage of whom qualify as low-income, category A veterans. Unfortunately, discrimination and cultural insensitivity remain problematic for minority veterans at many VA facilities.

This is the only advisory committee in the VA that is not permanent. The Department of

Veterans Affairs has a VA Center for Women Veterans and an advisory committee on women veterans. We should act now to assure that the VA Center for Minority Veterans maintains its own advisory committee.

Mr. Speaker, the specific issues of importance to minority veterans will not disappear on December 31, 1999. I ask my colleague to support this vital legislation.

H.R.—

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPEAL OF SUNSET PROVISION FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINOR- ITY VETERANS.

Subsection (e) of section 554 of title 38, United States Code, is repealed.

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation designed to declassify the records of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia. In doing so, I am joined by my colleagues: Mr. TAYLOR from Mississippi, Mr. TALENT from Missouri, and Mr. ROHRBACHER from California.

I served as a member of the Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia during the committee's period of existence in the 1970's. At the time, the Select Committee was tasked with the responsibility of determining whether American servicemen had been left behind in Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War.

At the time the committee was dissolved, its records were subject to House classification rules, which mandated the material be kept classified for 50 years. Similar regulations covered the records of the Senate's counterpart committee.

Several years ago, the Senate agreed to reduce the period of secrecy to 20 years, and as a result, declassified all of their committee files. This legislation would simply make a change in House rules to open all of the Select Committee's files and boxes of material to the public.

Mr. Speaker, the end of the cold war has resulted in the discovery of literally hundreds of documents which had previously been out of reach behind the Iron Curtain. I see no need for the House to maintain a veil of secrecy over its Select Committee files. Therefore, I ask that my colleagues join in supporting this worthwhile legislation which would bring the House rules on this subject in line with those of our counterpart committee in the Senate.

H. RES.—

Resolved, That the Archivist of the United States is authorized and directed to make available for public use the records of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia (94th Congress).